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AN EVANGELICAL *al Semir*

# FREE CHURCH CATECHISM

For Use in Home and School.

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Prepared by

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

of the

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES  
IN ENGLAND AND WALES.**

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*SEVENTH EDITION.*

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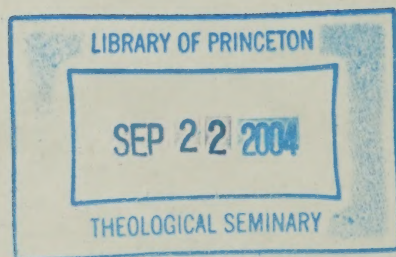
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National Council of  
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Evangelical Free Church  
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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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## EXPLANATORY NOTE.

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Two years ago the General Committee of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches decided to undertake the preparation of a new Catechism, which might meet the widespread, growing demand for a modern manual in the much-needed Catechetical instruction of our children ; and might at the same time exhibit the substantial agreement of the Evangelical Free Churches in relation to the fundamental and essential truths of Christianity. The Rev. PRINCIPAL DYKES, D.D., was requested to compile a Draft Catechism, and a Preliminary Committee, representing the associated Churches, was appointed to revise that draft in consultation with Dr. Dykes. The Preliminary Committee twice minutely revised the Draft Catechism, at many prolonged sessions, during the last two years. While the general construction of the Catechism has remained substantially unchanged, numerous variations and additions have been introduced.

At the close of last year an enlarged Committee was appointed to make a further and final revision of the Catechism. The names of reappointed members of the Preliminary Committee are distinguished by an asterisk in the following list of the Committee of Final Revision:

### **Congregationalists :—**

- \* Rev. C. A. BERRY, D.D. *Past President of the National Council and ex-Chairman of the Congregational Union.*
- \* Rev. A. MACKENNAL, D.D., *Secretary and President-elect of the National Council and ex-Chairman of the Congregational Union.*
- Rev. J. GUINNESS ROGERS, D.D., *ex-Chairman of the Congregational Union.*
- Rev. G. S. BARRETT, D.D., *ex-Chairman of the Congregational Union.*
- Mr. J. VERNON BARTLET, M.A., *Lecturer in Church History, Mansfield College, Oxford.*

### **Wesleyan Methodists :—**

- Rev. J. S. BANKS, *Professor of Theology, Headingley College.*
- Rev. J. A. BEET, D.D., *Professor of Theology, Richmond College.*
- Rev. W. T. DAVISON, D.D., *Professor of Theology Birmingham College.*
- Rev. G. G. FINDLAY, B.A., *Professor of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, Headingley College.*
- \* Rev. HUGH PRICE HUGHES, M.A., *Past President of the National Council and President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference.*

**Baptists :—**

- \*Rev. J. CLIFFORD, D.D., *President of the National Council and ex-President of the Baptist Union.*
- \*Rev. T. VINCENT TYMMS, D.D., *Principal of Rawdon College and ex-President of the Baptist Union.*
- \*Rev. G. P. GOULD, M.A., *Principal of Regent's Park College.*

**Primitive Methodists :—**

- \*Rev. H. B. KENDALL, B.A., *Connexional Editor.*
- \*Mr. A. S. PEAKE, M.A., *Professor of Biblical Theology at the Primitive Methodist College, Manchester.*

**Presbyterians :—**

- \*Rev. J. OSWALD DYKES, D.D., *Principal of the Presbyterian College, Cambridge, and ex-Moderator of the English Presbyterian Synod.*
- \*Rev. J. MONRO GIBSON, D.D., *ex-President of the National Council and ex-Moderator of the English Presbyterian Synod.*

**Methodist New Connexion :—**

- Rev. W. J. TOWNSEND, D.D., *ex-President of the New Connexion Conference and late Connexional Editor.*

### **Bible Christians :—**

Rev. F. W. BOURNE, *ex-President of the Bible Christian Conference and Connexional Editor.*

### **United Methodist Free Church :—**

Rev. DAVID BROOK, D.C.L.

The great object of the Committee has been to express the Christian doctrines held in common by all Evangelical Free Churches. The theologians who have prepared this Catechism represent, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of not less, and probably many more, than sixty millions of avowed Christians in all parts of the world. Students of history will be aware that no such combined statement of interdenominational belief has ever previously been attempted, much less achieved, since the lamentable day when Martin Luther contended with Huldreich Zwingli. In view of the distressing controversies of our forefathers, it is profoundly significant and gladdening to be able to add that every question and every answer in this Catechism has been finally adopted without a dissentient vote. *Deo soli gloria.*

HUGH PRICE HUGHES, M.A.,

*Chairman and Convener.*

London,

*December 1898.*



## CATECHISM.

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1. *Question. What is the Christian religion?*

*Answer.* It is the religion founded by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who has brought to us the full knowledge of God and of Eternal Life.

2. *Q. How must we think of God?*

*A.* God is the one Eternal Spirit, Creator and Sustainer of all things; He is Love, boundless in wisdom and power, perfect in holiness and justice, in mercy and truth.

3. *Q. By what name has Jesus taught us to call God?*

*A.* Our Father in Heaven.

4. *Q. What do we learn from this name of Father?*

*A.* We learn that God made us in His own image, that He cares for us by His wise providence, and that He loves us far better than any earthly parent can.

5. *Q. What does Jesus say about Himself?*

A. That He is the Son of God, Whom the Father in His great love sent into the world to be our Saviour from sin.

6. *Q. What is sin?*

A. Sin is any thought or feeling, word or act, which either is contrary to God's holy law, or falls short of what it requires.

7. *Q. Say in brief what God's law requires.*

A. That we should love God with our whole heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.

8. *Q. Are we able of ourselves to do this?*

A. No : for, although man was made innocent at the first, yet he fell into disobedience, and since then no one has been able, in his own strength, to keep God's law.

9. *Q. What are the consequences of sin?*

A. Sin separates man from God, corrupts his nature, exposes him to manifold pains and griefs, and, unless he repents, must issue in death eternal.

10. Q. *Can we deliver ourselves from sin and its consequences?*

A. By no means; for we are unable either to cleanse our own hearts or to make amends for our offences.

11. Q. *How did the Son of God save His people from their sins?*

A. For our salvation He came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.

12. Q. *What benefit have we from the Son of God becoming Man?*

A. We have a Mediator between God and men; one who as God reveals to us what God is; and, as perfect Man, represents our race before God.

13. Q. *What further benefits have we from our Lord's life on earth?*

A. We have in Him a brother man who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, as well as a perfect example of what we ought to be.

14. *Q. What did He accomplish for us by His death on the Cross ?*

A. By offering Himself a sacrifice without blemish unto God, He fulfilled the requirements of Divine Holiness, atoned for all our sins, and broke the power of Sin.

15. *Q. What does the resurrection of Jesus teach us ?*

A. It assures us that He has finished the work of our redemption ; that the dominion of death is ended ; and that, because He lives, we shall live also.

16. *Q. What do we learn from His ascension into Heaven ?*

A. That we have in Him an Advocate with the Father, Who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

17. *Q. What do we learn from His session at the right hand of God ?*

A. That He is exalted as our Head and King, to Whom has been given all authority in heaven and on earth.

18. *Q. How does Jesus Christ still carry on His work of salvation ?*

A. By the third person in the blessed Trinity, the Holy Spirit, Who was sent forth at Pentecost.

19. *Q. What is the mystery of the blessed Trinity?*

A. That the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, into Whose Name we are baptized, are one God.

20. *Q. What must we do in order to be saved?*

A. We must repent of our sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

21. *Q. What is it to repent?*

A. He who truly repents of his sin not only confesses it with shame and sorrow, but above all he turns from it to God with sincere desire to be forgiven and steadfast purpose to sin no more.

22. *Q. What is it to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?*

A. It means that we rely on Him as our Teacher, Saviour and Lord, putting our whole trust in the grace of God through Him.

23. *Q. How are we enabled to repent and believe?*

A. By the secret power of the Holy Spirit working graciously in our hearts, and using for this end providential discipline and the message of the Gospel



24. *Q. What benefits do we receive when we repent and believe ?*

A. Being united to Christ by faith, our sins are freely forgiven for His sake ; our hearts are renewed ; and we become children of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

25. *Q. In what way are we to shew ourselves thankful for such great benefits ?*

A. By striving to follow the example of Jesus in doing and bearing the will of our Heavenly Father.

26. *Q. Where do we find God's will briefly expressed ?*

A. In the Decalogue or Law of the Ten Commandments, as explained by Jesus Christ.

27. *Q. Repeat the Ten Commandments.*

A. I. Thou shalt have none other gods before Me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them : for I

the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate Me ; and shewing mercy unto thousands, of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

- III. Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain.
- IV. Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work : but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God : in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates : for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is. and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.
- V. Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon

the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

vi. Thou shalt do no murder.

vii. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

viii. Thou shalt not steal.

ix. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

x. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.

28. *Q. How has our Lord taught us to understand this Law?*

*A.* He taught that the Law reaches to the desires, motives and intentions of the heart, so that we cannot keep it unless we love God with our whole heart and our neighbour as ourselves.

(i.) *Q. What does the First Commandment teach us?*

*A.* To take the one living and true God for our own God, and render unto Him the honour which is due to Him alone.

(ii.) Q. *What does the Second Commandment teach us ?*

A. To worship God in spirit and in truth, not by the use of images or other devices of men, but in such ways as He has Himself appointed.

(iii.) Q. *What does the Third Commandment teach us ?*

A. Never to blaspheme and never to utter profane words, but always to regard and use with deep reverence the Holy Name of God.

(iv.) Q. *What does the Fourth Commandment teach us ?*

A. That we ought to be diligent in our calling during six days of the week, but keep one day hallowed for rest and worship ; and because Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, Christians observe that day, calling it the Lord's Day.

(v.) Q. *What does the Fifth Commandment teach us ?*

A. That God regards with special favour those who reverence and obey their parents.

(vi.) Q. *What does the Sixth Commandment teach us ?*

A. To hold human life sacred, and, instead of hating or hurting our fellow-men, even our enemies, to do all we can to preserve them in health and well-being.

(vii.) Q. *What does the Seventh Commandment teach us?*

A. To honour God's ordinance of marriage, to preserve modesty, and to keep ourselves chaste in thought, speech and behaviour.

(viii.) Q. *What does the Eighth Commandment teach us?*

A. To be honest and fair in all our dealings, and in no wise to take unbrotherly advantage of another by fraud or force.

(ix.) Q. *What does the Ninth Commandment teach us?*

A. To avoid false testimony, and never to deceive anyone or spread reports to our neighbour's hurt.

(x.) Q. *What does the Tenth Commandment teach us?*

A. Not even in our heart to grudge our fellow-man his prosperity or desire to deprive him of that which is his, but always to cultivate a thankful and contented spirit.

29. Q. *What special means has God provided to assist us in leading a life of obedience?*

A. His Word, Prayer, the Sacraments, and the Fellowship of the Church.



30. *Q. Where do we find God's Word written?*

*A.* In the Holy Bible, which is the inspired record of God's revelation given to be our rule of faith and duty.

31. *Q. What is Prayer?*

*A.* In prayer we commune with our Father in heaven, confess our sins, give Him thanks for all His benefits, and ask, in the name of Jesus, for such things as He has promised.

32. *Q. Repeat the Lord's Prayer.*

*A.* "Our Father, Which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

(i.) *Q. What is meant by the words—"Hallowed be Thy Name"?*

*A.* That our Heavenly Father would lead all men to acknowledge and reverence Him as Jesus has made Him known, so that everywhere His glorious praise may be proclaimed.

- (ii.) Q. *What do we pray for in the words—"Thy Kingdom come"?*
- A. We pray that the Gospel may spread and prevail in all the world, till the power of evil is overthrown and Jesus reigns in every heart and governs every relation of human life.
- (iii.) Q. *What is meant by the words—"Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven"?*
- A. That all men may be led to accept God's holy will, and cheerfully to do whatever He requires, so that His gracious purpose may be fulfilled.
- (iv.) Q. *What shall we desire when we say—"Give us this day our daily bread"?*
- A. That God would prosper our daily labour and provide what is needful for the body, ridding us of anxiety and disposing us to contentment.
- (v.) Q. *Explain this petition—"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us"*
- A. Here Christ teaches us that we may confidently ask God to forgive us our sins, but that He will not do so unless we ourselves from the heart forgive those who have wronged us.
- (vi.) Q. *What do we ask for in the last petition—"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"?*
- A. We entreat that we may not need, for our humbling, to be exposed to severe temptations, and that we may be kept from the power of every spiritual enemy.

33. *Q. What is the Holy Catholic Church ?*

A. It is that Holy Society of believers in Christ Jesus which He founded, of which He is the only Head, and in which He dwells by His Spirit ; so that, though made up of many communions, organised in various modes, and scattered throughout the world, it is yet One in Him.

34. *Q. For what ends did our Lord found His Church ?*

A. He united His people into this visible brotherhood for the worship of God and the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments ; for mutual edification, the administration of discipline, and the advancement of His Kingdom.

35. *Q. What is the essential mark of a true branch of the Catholic Church ?*

A. The essential mark of a true branch of the Catholic Church is the presence of Christ, through His indwelling Spirit, manifested in holy life and fellowship.

36. *Q. What is a Free Church ?*

A. A Church which acknowledges none but Jesus Christ as Head, and, therefore, exercises its right to interpret and administer His laws without restraint or control by the State.

37. *Q. What is the duty of the Church to the State?*

A. To observe all the laws of the State unless contrary to the teaching of Christ ; to make intercession for the people, and particularly for those in authority ; to teach both rulers and subjects the eternal principles of righteousness, and to imbue the nation with the spirit of Christ.

38. *Q. What is the duty of the State to the Church?*

A. To protect all branches of the Church and their individual members in the enjoyment of liberty to worship God, and in efforts to promote the Religion of Christ, which do not interfere with the civil rights of others.

39. *Q. What is a Christian minister?*

A. A Christian minister is one who is called of God and the Church to be a teacher of the Word and a pastor of the Flock of Christ.

40. *Q. How may the validity of such a Ministry be proved?*

A. The decisive proof of a valid Ministry is the sanction of the Divine Head

of the Church, manifested in the conversion of sinners and the edification of the Body of Christ.

41. *Q. What are the Sacraments of the Church?*

A. Sacred rites instituted by our Lord Jesus to make more plain by visible signs the inward benefits of the Gospel, to assure us of His promised grace, and, when rightly used, to become a means to convey it to our hearts.

42. *Q. How many Sacraments are there?*

A. Two only : Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

43. *Q. What is the visible sign in the sacrament of baptism?*

A. Water: wherein the person is baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

44. *Q. What inward benefits does this signify?*

A. The washing away of sin and the new birth wrought by the Holy Spirit in all who repent and believe.



45. *Q. What are the outward signs in the Lord's Supper?*

A. Bread and wine : which the Lord has commanded to be given and received for a perpetual memorial of His death.

46. *Q. What is signified by the Bread and Wine?*

A. By the Bread is signified the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ in which He lived and died ; by the Wine is signified His Blood, shed once for all upon the Cross for the remission of sins.

47. *Q. What do they receive who in penitence and faith partake of this sacrament?*

A. They feed spiritually upon Christ as the nourishment of the soul, by which they are strengthened and refreshed for the duties and trials of life.

48. *Q. Why do Christians partake in common of the Lord's Supper?*

A. To shew their oneness in Christ, to confess openly their faith in Him, and to give one another a pledge of brotherly love.

49. Q. *What is a Christian's chief comfort in this life?*

A. That in Christ he belongs to God, Who makes all things work together for good to them that love Him.

50. Q. *What hope have we in the prospect of death?*

A. We are well assured that all who fall asleep in Christ are with Him in rest and peace ; and that even as He rose from the dead, so shall we also rise and be clothed with glorified bodies.

51. Q. *What has Jesus told us of His Second Advent?*

A. That, at a time known only to God, He shall appear again with power, to be glorified in His saints and to be the Judge of all mankind ; and that for His Appearing we should be always ready.

52. Q. *What is the Christian's hope concerning the future state?*

A. We look for the life everlasting, wherein all who are saved through Christ shall see God and inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

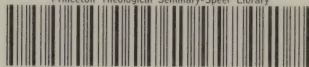
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